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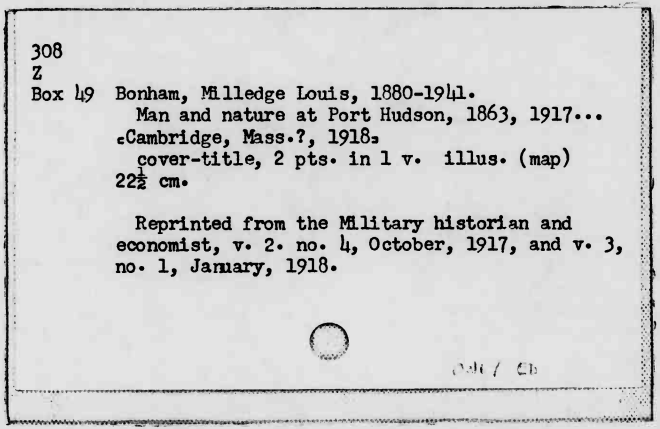

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Man and Nature at Port Hudson 1863, 1917

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Reprinted from THE MILITARY HISTORIAN AND ECONOMIST, Vol. II, No. 4, October, 1917, and Vol. III, No. 1, January, 1918

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MAN AND NATURE AT PORT HUDSON
1863, 1917

MILLEDGE L. BONHAM, JR.

I

Two miles below the point where Thompson's Creek flows into the Mississippi River was the village of Port Hudson, at the extreme northwest corner of the Louisiana parish of East Baton Rouge. Twenty miles below is the parish seat and state capital, the city of Baton Rouge. Bayou Sara, a small village at the foot of a steep bluff on which is St. Francisville, is about eight miles north of Port Hudson; the mouth of the Red River is twenty miles farther on, with Vicksburg another 110 miles upstream.[1] From Port Hudson to Clinton, the seat of East Feliciana parish, ran the Clinton and Port Hudson Railway, twenty-one miles long. Clinton was the *entrepot* for the produce of much of southeastern Louisiana and Mississippi, which, sent thence by rail, was transferred to steamboats at Port Hudson. This railroad, built in 1833,[2] was one of the first in the United States, and like all the early roads was a feeder for water traffic. Today, ten miles of the track, from Clinton to Ethel on the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad, is still in use. The rails and crossties of the other part have long since been removed, though long stretches of the old road bed are still to be seen along the public highways.

Port Hudson, at that time, was really a port. Situated on an abrupt almost precipitous bluff, just where the river makes a sharp turn to the west, it overlooked a wide stretch of level alluvial plain on the opposite shore. At the foot of the bluff was a narrow beach, upon which already were growing willows, cottonwoods and other saplings. Along this beach the

[1] These are the direct distances by land. By river they are from a third to four-fifths greater.

[2] Semple, *American History and its Geographic Conditions*, 373.

river was gradually making a "batture" or deposit of alluvion, submerged at high water, but gradually encroaching upon the stream, which in turn was steadily gnawing at the peninsula in the southwest crook of the bend. Just within the curve on the northeast side, right below the village, the river had deposited a little sandy peninsula. Not far above this was the mouth of Foster's or Sandy Creek. In the narrow inlet between the peninsula and the bluff was the landing place for Port Hudson. Today, the bluff is perhaps a mile from the water's edge, and the low, level batture intervening is thickly grown with trees some of them thirty or forty feet high and as many years old. Anyone wishing to go to Port Hudson by water must land at Port Hickey a mile below. The traveller by rail will get off at a village called Port Hudson, on the line of the Louisiana Railway and Navigation Company. Thence, proceeding on foot or by vehicle, for a mile or so to the west, he will come to an almost deserted cluster of houses now known as "old Port Hudson."[3]

The bluff upon which Port Hudson is situated is several miles long, varying in height from sixty to eighty feet above the water.[4] A generally level plateau extends eastward for a mile

[3] See the map on the next page. This was adapted by Miss Lizzie Marionneaux, (a student of Louisiana State University) from Plate XXXVIII of the Atlas of the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* [cited below as O. R.,] and a few touches were added by me.

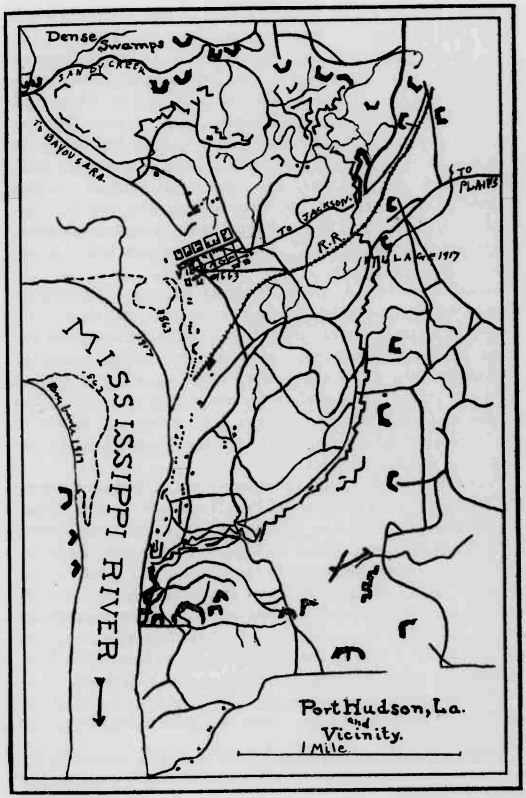
Explanation:

River { Dotted line, shore in 1863. / Solid line; shore in 1917.

Entrenchments { Light lines; Confederate. / Heavy lines, Union.

A careful personal examination of the topography about Port Hudson, and a comparison of state, parish and historical maps makes me think that the map in Spears' *Farragut* (p. 282) is inaccurate in its proportions, and that in Davis' *Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*, II, 42, (cited below as R. & F. C. G.) is not much better. The map in *Battles and Leaders* (cited below as B. & L.) is drawn from Plate XXXVIII, which seems the best, with Map XIII in Livermore's continuation of Ropes' *Story of the Civil War*, (II) as a good second.

[4] The *Confederate Military History* (cited below as C. M. H.), X, 109, gives 85 feet as the extreme height; Federal naval officers estimated it at 75 and 80 feet. *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies*, (cited below as O. R. N.), Series 1, vol. XIX .359 .354.



or more, sloping rather sharply inland to Sandy Creek, which flows through difficult marshes and dense canebrakes. Mr. F. L. Richardson, writing in the *New Orleans Times-Democrat* (April 25, 1906),[5] states that in 1863 "the country immediately around and adjacent to Port Hudson was broken. There were no high hills, but ravines and hollows which ran from the river were frequent, and in some places forty to sixty feet below the common level." This is true today; some of these are mere rain-washed gullies, others are canyon-like gulches, sloping steeply to the river, and following an irregular course. One of the most important is the channel of the nameless, sluggish, insignificant little "bayou", which merges just south of the hamlet of Port Hickey.

Mention has been made of Thompson's Creek. This stream rises in Wilkinson county, Mississippi, flowing south then southwest. It forms the boundary between the parishes of East and West Feliciana, Louisiana, and as has been said, enters the Mississippi two miles above Port Hudson, bringing with it sand and gravel. Too shallow for navigation by anything but canoes and flatbottomed barges in high water, the mouth of the creek afforded a hiding place for light draught Confederate vessels as will appear later.

Port Hudson's strategic value depended in part on its being the terminus of the Clinton and Port Hudson Railroad. Roads ran northward to Clinton, Jackson and Bayou Sara, and thence into Mississippi, southward to Ross and Springfield Landings and Baton Rouge; eastward to the Comite and Amite rivers. General Banks thought its great importance arose from the facility with which the Confederates could concentrate troops at this point.[6] The possession of Port Hudson also gave them control of the mouth of the Red River, as well as of the Mississippi at a point between New Orleans and Vicksburg.

They perceived these facts, so "about the first of April, 1862, earthworks were thrown up; a mere wall with a dry ditch, from

[5] This article was called to my attention by Mr. A. H. Jelks, postmaster at Port Hudson, to whom I am indebted for other favors in connection with the preparation of this paper.

[6] *O. R.*, XV, 255.

which the earth had been cast to make a wall about four and a half feet high, and not over five or six feet broad at the top; the base from eight to fifteen feet thick. This was built with angles." Starting from the river near Sandy Creek, the line "ran back for a quarter of a mile, and thence forming a section of a circle, it extended southward for about three-quarters of a mile and then turned back toward the river, which it reached about a mile and a quarter below the place of starting."[7] Shortly after this, New Orleans fell, and in May Baton Rouge was occupied by the Federals. But so long as the Red River and its tributary the Ouachita, were open to the Confederates, supplies and troops could be brought from the trans-Mississippi states, and they had a "secure line of communication through Texas and Mexico with Gulf ports."[8]

A Mr. Pond, of Clinton, clearly indicated the importance of Port Hudson, in a letter he wrote (Sept. 2, 1862) to Adjutant-General Cooper. "This position," said he, "is of the first magnitude and importance and should be held at any cost. It gives us command of a section of the river from here to Vicksburg; guards the country watered by the Little, Red, Black and Ouachita rivers in Louisiana, provides a safe means of transit for supplies and munitions of war, and gives communication with an immense producing area in the west. Texas is brought into communication with all the interests of the nation, and her abundant products can and will find their way to our army depots. The western side of the river is our only reliance for sugar, and already thousands of hogsheads are collected on the other bank, under the range of our guns, awaiting transportation. Western Louisiana produces immense quantities of salt, and all that is needed is the means of transit to fill the demand for both public and private uses." He also pointed out that while practically impregnable from the river, Port Hudson was "approachable over a large and level country, presenting very few difficulties to a land attack . . . . an advancing force would encounter but few natural impediments."[9]

[7] Richardson.

[8] Semple, 305; Fiske, *Miss. Val. in the Civil War.*, 183 *sq.*

[9] *O. R.* XV, 808.

After the indecisive battle of Baton Rouge (Aug. 5, 1862), Major General Breckinridge assigned Brigadier-General Daniel Ruggles to the command of Port Hudson and the troops in the vicinity. He was directed to continue as rapidly as possible the fortification of the post. Taylor promised to send any siege guns he could spare, to help in this.[10] While Ruggles was busy at his task, the U. S. Gunboat *Essex* slipped up the river. Passing down later, she was injured by the three guns then mounted, though not destroyed, as Ruggles thought.[11] We shall hear from her again.

Towards the end of August, Major-General Van Dorn, commanding at Vicksburg, directed Ruggles to bring most of his men to Jackson, Miss., leaving from 2,400 to 2,800 at Port Hudson, under Brigadier-General W. N. R. Beall. Lieutenant-General Pemberton, then commanding at Jackson, ordered Beall, about the 22d of October, to intrench at once, by detached redoubts and redans, the approaches to Port Hudson by most of the roads leading into the village, leaving open the Jackson and Clinton roads.[12] Beall had trouble in carrying out these orders, as he could not persuade the planters to supply the slaves for intrenching, and the War Department declined his suggestion that martial law be declared, though he was authorized to impress slaves.[13] Two months later he was superseded by Major-General Franklin Gardner.

This officer was a West Pointer, "a native of New York and at [this] time was forty years old. He had seen service in the Mexican War and on the frontier. He had spent much of his time in Louisiana, and had married a daughter of Governor Alexandre Mouton of that state:[14] It was said of him, "a thoroughly earnest man, he was untiring in his efforts to prepare for the conflict which had become inevitable after New Orleans had been captured and Vicksburg menaced."[15]

[10] *Ibid.*, 800 *sqq.*
[11] *Ibid.*, 803, 808.
[12] *Ibid.*, 841.
[13] *Ibid.*, 841, *sq.*
[14] Richardson.
[15] *C. M. H.*, X, 109.

How the post appeared about this time, is shown by the diary of a Baton Rouge girl, who thus describes what she saw, proceeding south from the village: "Following a crescent, far below us lay the water battery, concealed by trees which grew by the water's edge, looking from where we stood like quite a formidable precipice. Then . . . . through a camp, down a steep hill, past a long line of rifle pits, a winding road and another camp, where more men stared and cooked their supper, we came to the last battery but one, which lay so far below that it was too late to visit it."[16]

Gardner found that a large amount of work had been done, generally well done, but there was still much to do. Though he considered the batteries well made and well posted, there was not enough ammunition. As to the field works, he found them well laid out and constructed, and being pushed as rapidly as the limited resources would permit, hence he urged that entrenching tools be sent at once. In his opinion, the broken country made it difficult to fortify every point thoroughly, without extending his lines too far.[17] Early in January, 1863, anticipating an attack from the Federal forces in Baton Rouge, he asked Pemberton and General Jos. E. Johnston for additional forces. The latter was reluctant to send any more, and thought Gardner could hold the place against any attack with what he had, *i.e.*, about 10,500 of whom he reported 8,239 effective.[18] These he organized into three brigades of infantry, with artillery and cavalry as separate commands. Later his force was increased to five brigades of infantry, which with the other two arms aggregated 26,720. Gregg's brigade held the right of the line, Maxey's the centre and Beall's the left.[19]

Colonel Fauntleroy, inspector-general of Johnston's army made a visit to the post this month (January) and found a "lack of discipline and instruction among the troops, with a

[16] Dawson, *A. Confederate Girl's Diary*, 247. This book gives several personal glimpses of the officers of the garrison.
[17] *O. R.*, XV, 913 *sq.*
[18] *Ibid.*, 921, 933.
[19] *Ibid.*, 934, 1032, 1061.

very general inefficiency of the officers of the command." The batteries on the bluff extended over a mile, and he considered them "very formidable," but he did not think the water battery, of two 32-pounders, so well placed. The magazines he thought badly located, as did Gardner. Fauntleroy found Gardner "much embarrassed by the presence of a number of women and children . . . . remaining in spite of his recommendation to remove . . . . persons who have come to occupy the houses made vacant by the owner's removal.[20] Gardner was never entirely relieved of this embarrassment.

Ten days after this inspection Gardner notified Pemberton that Banks had arrived at Baton Rouge with reinforcements. To this Pemberton sent the encouraging reply—"Enemy endeavoring to get below Vicksburg." He directed Gardner to send up the Red River all steamers, between Port Hudson and Vicksburg, destroying any in danger of capture.[21] Throughout February, Gardner remained in doubt as to Banks' movements, and as to whether the force at Baton Rouge was to be increased or withdrawn. On the 22nd Pemberton announced that he would send a brigade to reinforce Port Hudson, adding comfortingly, "Mortar boats can do you no possible harm. Remember to reserve your ammunition, for I have no more to send." The same day, Gardner replied: "Rations are essential now."[22] Except for sending out a few skirmishing expeditions on both sides of the river he seems to have devoted all his time and resources to strengthening his works. Rust's brigade arrived to reinforce him, on the 3rd of March, and soon after some other troops, of which he made a brigade under Buford.[23]

Meanwhile Banks had returned to New Orleans, and sent an expedition under Weitzel, which "was trying to find a way of turning Port Hudson on the west by means of the Atchafalaya, the mouth of the Red River and the network

[20] *O. R.*, XV, 943 *sqq.*
[21] *Ibid.* 955 *sqq.*
[22] *Ibid.* 985.
[23] *Ibid.* 991–1005.

CONVERS'N WITH J.R.NESBIT
A VETERAN OF PT HUDSON

of bayous interlacing and intersecting one another, that connect the Atchafalaya with the Mississippi."[24] The way was obstructed by General Dick Taylor, who skilfully and stubbornly contested the advance from Berwick, towards Alexandria. At Farragut's suggestion Banks agreed to make a combined land and water attack on Port Hudson. This was due to the admiral's desire to try to get his fleet past the batteries at Port Hudson, which desire was increased by the news that two rams, the *Indianola* and the *Queen of the West*, which had run by Vicksburg had been captured by the Confederates.[25]

Accordingly Banks concentrated his forces at Baton Rouge, and moved to the rear of Port Hudson on the 14th of March. As late as November 1862, the Confederates had made no provision for a force upon the west side of the river, though the *Essex* found and destroyed a torpedo which they had placed in the river. In March a small infantry force was placed on the shore opposite Port Hudson, which was later occupied by the Federals who placed four cannon there,[26] as shown on the map. Farragut had advanced from Baton Rouge on the morning of the 14th of March to the head of Prophet's Island[27] where he found the *Essex* and some mortar boats. His plan was for the *Hartford*, (his flagship) to lead, with the gunboat *Albatross* lashed to her port side; the *Richmond* and the gunboat *Genessee* to come next; the *Monongahela* and the gunboat *Kineo* third, while the *Mississippi*, his fastest ship, followed without a gunboat.[28] Telling his captains that "the best protection against the enemy's fire is a well-directed fire from our guns,"[29] Farragut ordered the attack for dawn of the 15th; but finding his ships in readiness about

[24] *B. & L.*, III, 589; *cf.* Banks' report, *O. R.*, XXVI, 5–18.
[25] The *Indianola* was so damaged that she had to be destroyed to prevent her recapture; the *Queen* was destroyed in an engagement on the Teche in April. Scharf, *History of the Confederate Navy*, 362 sq.
[26] *O. R. N.*, 1, XIX, 351, 543, 679, 681.
[27] This island is sometimes called "Profit Island," or "Proffitt's Island," but as the legend is that it was the abode of an Indian medicine man, *Prophet's* seems preferable.
[28] Farragut's report, *O. R. N.*, 1, XIX, 665, and diagram, 669.
[29] Spears' *Farragut*, 281–291, gives an interesting account of the action.

11 p.m. of the 14th he moved to the attack at once, the *Essex* and the mortar boats supporting him with a steady fire. Banks intimates that because of the "premature commencement of the action" the army did not do as much as had been expected. His adjutant-general, Col. R. B. Irwin, says: "In a naval affair like this, the co-operation of the army could not have been very effective at best; the change of hour left us little more than spectators and auditors of the battle between the ships and the forts." A Southern writer caustically observes: "Banks had been far from making a serious diversion in the rear of the works on the Port Hudson road . . . . ["He] was out on the Bayou Sara road idly reconnoitering when fleet and batteries dashed together, and his hope lay in ruins."[30]

As to the result, Banks reported that "naval history scarcely presents a more brilliant feat than the passage of these formidable batteries." That "Farragut barely escaped defeat" is the mature conclusion of Hosmer, a better historian than Banks.[31] In fact, only the *Hartford* and her consort the *Albatross* made the passage through a storm of solid shot and shell from the bluff, and a brisk musketry fire from the opposite shore. The *Richmond's* engine was injured by a shot, and she had to be towed to Prophet's Island. In attempting to round the point, against the strong current, the *Monongahela* ran aground. The bridge was shot from under Captain McKinstry, who was injured by the fall, so Lieutenant Thomas had the *Kineo* back off and draw the *Monongahela* afloat. Her engine becoming useless, she drifted to the island, and a little later the engine of the *Kineo* was also damaged. The *Mississippi*, also in turning the bend, ran aground. Her range was soon secured by the Confederates, who showed her no mercy. Captain Smith had his wounded and sick transferred to the *Essex* and after seeing his crew safely off, set fire to and abandoned her.[32] "It seemed fit," declares a Confederate, "that bearing the name she did, the *Mississippi* should end as our own *Louisiana* and *Arkansas* had ended—set on fire—burning

[30] *O. R.*, XV, 254; *B. & L.*, III, 590; *C. M. H.*, X, 111 *sqq.*
[31] *O. R.*, XXVI, i, 9; *Appeal to Arms*, 251.
[32] Reports of various officers, *O. R. N.*, 1, XIX, 665–695.

down to her engines—blowing up—scattering her debris upon the waters. It was the old story of the great river, told over again in flame."[33] In passing it may be mentioned that her first lieutenant was young George Dewey, who behaved with great coolness; one of the officers of the *Monongahela*—soon to be executive officer of the *Richmond*—was Winfield Scott Schley.[34] The bark of these two whelps of Farragut, become full grown "dogs of war," had an ominous sound in the ears of Spain at Manila and Santiago.

Until a few minutes before the attack, supply ships had been unloading corn for Gardner, who telegraphed Taylor during the bombardment that he would complete the unloading that night. His formal report says: "I had four steamboats unloading until the moment of the fight, and then I sent them up the river. They have all escaped as the *Hartford* was too badly damaged to pursue."[35] Soon, though, the *Hartford* and the *Albatross* were able to proceed, and blockaded the mouth of the Red River, thereby cutting off reinforcements and supplies from both Vicksburg and Port Hudson. Furthermore, it was possible for Farragut to communicate with Porter above Vicksburg, and the rest of his own fleet below Port Hudson. This latter he accomplished by signaling across the peninsula opposite the Port.

Towards the end of March, Lieutenant-Colonel Ellett of the (Union) Marine Brigade attempted to run past Vicksburg in open day with the rams *Switzerland* and *Lancaster*. The latter was destroyed, but the former, somewhat damaged, joined Farragut.[36] She did good service for the Federals, destroying at Bayou Sara 20 hogsheads of sugar, 500 sacks of corn and meal and 100 bushels of potatoes intended for the garrison of Port Hudson. Another effect of the presence of Farragut's ships on both sides of the peninsula was the interference with Taylor's attempts to provision the fort.[37]

[33] *C. M. H.*, X, 111.
[34] *O. R. N.*, 1, XX, 101, 226.
[35] *Ibid.*, 702 *sqq.*
[36] *O. R. N.*, 1, XX, 35, 41.
[37] *Ibid.*, *O. R.* XXVI, ii, 53. LII, ii, 499.

Mr. Nesbit, however, says that until the point was occupied by Federal troops Taylor had occasionally succeeded in swimming cattle across, and also sent in corn and potatoes. The fleet prevented the escape of the steamers *Starlight* and *Red Chief* from the mouth of Thompson's Creek, where the Confederates had concealed them, so they fell into the hands of the Federal troops.[38]

Returning now to Port Hudson, we find that Banks retired to Baton Rouge on the 15th of March, and ten days later moved via Brashear and Franklin to the Teche country. This compelled Taylor to withdraw towards Opelousas, with skirmishes at Bisland and Vermilion Bayou *en route*. Opelousas was occupied by the Federals on the 20th of April, Taylor retiring to Alexandria on the Red River. Having gotten in touch with Farragut at the mouth of the river, Banks started for Alexandria on the 5th of May, pushing Taylor slowly towards Shreveport.[39] One effect of the approach of the Union forces was the closing of the "Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy" (near Alexandria) of which William Tecumseh Sherman had been the first president.[40]

What was Gardner doing while Farragut was patrolling the Mississippi and Banks advancing up the Atchafalaya and Red rivers? In April, Pemberton withdrew the brigades of Rust and Buford; and ordered Gregg's to Jackson, Miss., on the 1st of May. Next day Gardner asked for more cavalry and "a good commander." This was met by the order to turn over his command to Beall and bring 5,000 infantry and all his cavalry to Vicksburg. Maxey's brigade and Miles' Legion were also ordered from Port Hudson a few days later. When Gardner got to Osyka, Miss., he received (May 8) the following from Pemberton: "Return with 2000 troops to Port Hudson and hold it to the last. President says both places must be

[38] *O. R. N.*, 1, XX, 46, 202, 211.

[39] *O. R.*, XV, 294–315; XXVI, i, 10 *sq. B. & L.* III, 590 *sqq.*

[40] Fleming, *Gen. Sherman as a College President, passim.* The Seminary is now Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge.

held."[41] On this point Davis remarks: "I had regarded it of vast importance to hold the two positions at Port Hudson and Vicksburg. Though gunboats had passed the batteries of both, they found it hazardous and transport vessels could not prudently risk it."[42]

(To be continued)

MILLEDGE L. BONHAM, JR.

[41] *O. R.*, XV, 1069, *sqq.* 1080.

[42] *R. & F. C. G.*, II, 422.

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MAN AND NATURE AT PORT HUDSON
1863, 1917

MILLEDGE L. BONHAM, JR.

II

After going up the Red River about sixty miles beyond Alexandria, Banks wrote to Halleck, on the 12th of May 1863 that it was impossible to join Grant at Vicksburg, as he had not the means of transportation, and dared not abandon his stores, trains, etc., to the enemy. Likewise, he did not consider it "practicable to follow the retreating enemy to Shreveport," so he said. "Nothing is left me but to direct my forces against Port Hudson with what success I may have."[1] Pursuant to this determination he crossed the Atchafalaya at Simsport, and the Mississippi at Bayou Sara, on the 23rd of May, arriving before Port Hudson next day. He had ordered Major-General Augur to move from Baton Rouge with about 3500 men. About four miles east of Port Hudson Augur's advanced cavalry encountered Colonel Miles, (May 24) who with 400 infantry and a battery had been sent on a reconnaissance by Gardner. At first Miles drove the Federals back, but when he encountered their main body was compelled to withdraw.[2] Next day Augur formed a junction with Banks' forces and the siege of Port Hudson was begun.

General Joseph E. Johnston, revising the old adage, considered an army in (his) bush (or field) worth two in the enemy's hands; so on the 19th of May he had ordered Gardner to evacuate Port Hudson. To his dismay he received on the 23rd a dispatch of the 21st saying that Banks was crossing at Bayou Sara, forces were coming from Baton Rouge, so Gardner demanded reinforcements. Johnston responded by repeating his orders for evacuation, adding, "You cannot be reinforced. Do not allow yourself to be invested. At every

[1] *O. R.*, XV, 316 *sq.*
[2] *Ibid.*, 1, XXIV, i, 12, 667, *sq.*

risk, save the troops, and if practicable move in this direction." But it was too late: Gardner never received the message.[3] Even if it had reached him in time, it is doubtful if he would have disregarded Pemberton's emphatic: "The President says both places must be held."

It is not the purpose of this essay to follow the siege in detail. Neither the data nor the technical knowledge is at the writer's command. Were they available, it is to be doubted if such an analysis would be of profit, in the light of twentieth century military science. Only the larger movements, then, will be sketched, and certain lesser incidents, interesting in themselves, will be recounted.

The Confederate works have been partly described above, and the map opposite page 375 will show their main features. Mr. Richardson, in the article quoted, affirms that these lines were designed for defence by 22,000 troops at least, and one can well believe it. Less than 6000, of whom not over 4500 were effective, held the place on the 24th of May.[4] Commencing near Sandy Creek, these lines followed roughly the outer edge of the plateau, which in some places, e.g., the northeast, sloped rather abruptly; but, for the most part, merged gradually into the plain. The appearance of the lines was somewhat that of a semi-ellipse, whose right end rested on the river in the ravine or bottom, just below Port Hickey. On the hill just above was the strong redoubt known as "the Citadel."[5] Opposite, on the crest of the slope across the bayou, the Federal left later rested. Thence the Union lines wound in a very irregular and discontinuous way back of the present Mt. Zion church (negro), across the public road, now leading to the National Cemetery, northeast to the ravine again and so on behind the site of the present village of Port Hudson to the morass and canebrakes in the Sandy Creek bottom. The map in Spears' *Farragut* (p. 282) has "impassable abatis" marked outside the Confederate works. This phrase is justi-

[3] *Ibid.*, 242.

[4] Livermore says 4600; Richardson, 4200: Banks says Gardner surrendered 5500 in July.

[5] This is clearly shown on Map XIII, Livermore, *op. cit.*, II.

fied by Mr. Richardson, who says: "In most of the ravines small undergrowth abounded. On the outside of the fort, however, the trees and undergrowth had been cut down all around the entire fortification so as to give an unobstructed view of any force which might assail it. On the Southern or lower wing, the trees had been cut down or thrown with their branches extended outward." The map shows this to have been true on the northern slope also, and we shall see that it was equally true of the centre.

As described by Colonel Fauntleroy, in the report already cited, the works consisted of "a *crêmaillère* line, connected by redans and curtains, extending over a distance of two and a half miles, the most important part of which [had] already been completed." Another line, extending for six miles had been commenced and Gardner was connecting the uncompleted portions on the north by rifle pits. The map drawn by General Banks' engineers during the siege[6] shows that beginning with the rifle pits near Sandy Creek, the defences had been continued by the *crêmaillère*, supplemented by other pits, for a mile to the southeast, where a more advanced *crêmaillère* began, which continued, as shown on the accompanying map, southward, then irregularly southwest to the river near Ross Landing, below Fort Hickey. Outside this line were occasional redans, with curtains. Along the entire line were thirty or thirty-one guns, varying from 3-inch rifles to 34-pounders. Sometimes these guns were placed on barbettes; in other cases they were fired through embrasures; often one gun served two embrasures.[7] At the more important angles, as that near the Plains Store road, as many as three guns were placed together. Some of the guns had to to be recast several times during the siege. Along the river bank were several strong batteries of two and three guns, with single guns at varying intervals. Their calibre was in general greater than that of those on the land side. Two were 32-pounders; two 42-pounders; two 68-pounders—about twenty guns in all. Photographs of some of the earthworks, part of a river battery,

[6] Plate XXXVIII, *Atlas, O. R. A.*

[7] See map cited in Note 1. This is confirmed by Mr. Nesbit.

rifle pits, the bastion fort or "Citadel," and so on, may be seen in the *Photographic History of the Civil War*.[8]

Within the Confederate lines were several redoubts. Almost due north of the village, between the river and the outer trenches was a pentagonal mound of earth, with breastworks upon it. Farther east was a lunette. South of the railroad were two parallel bastions, with rifle pits between the outer bastion and the *crêmaillère*; at the southwest, was the Citadel with a similar line of rifle pits. The *crémaillère* itself was strengthened at intervals with redoubts.[9] As seen above, there were about 5000 men with fifty pieces of ordnance to defend these works. Of course after the fort was invested Gardner got no reinforcements, while he was constantly losing by disease, desertion and battle. He reported 4098 present, the 30th of June.[10]

Across the river, as noted, the Confederates had sharpshooters and infantry, at the time of Farragut's dash, but this point was later occupied by the Federals who placed two 12-pound Napoleons near the upper end of the inlet back of the batture and two 30-pound Parrotts at different points farther down.

At the beginning of the siege Banks had about 14,000 men, and according to Colonel Irwin, "from first to last had nearly 20,000 men of all arms. . . . . Yet the effective strength of infantry and artillery at no time exceeded 13,000, and at last hardly reached 9000."[11] This was partly due, of course to climate and weather, which bore hardly upon the soldiers from the northern states. From the maps already cited, we learn that on the east side of the river the Federals had six 30-pound Parrotts; five 24-pounders; fifteen 20-pounders; two

[8] VIII, 210-217. Note also the pictures of Banks' artillery *en route* to Pt. Hudson, and the batteries for Vicksburg leaving the barracks at Baton Rouge—now the dormitories of Louisiana State University. Many of these pictures were taken by A. D. Lytle of Baton Rouge, who died only a few weeks before this article was begun.

[9] These details are shown more fully in the diagrams in Davis's *Rise and Fall*, II, 421, and Spears' *Farragut*, 282, than in the other maps cited.

[10] *O. R. A.*, I, XXVI, ii, 98.

[11] *B. & L.*, III, 595.

10-pounders; two 12-inch and six 8-inch siege howitzers, three 10-inch and nine 8-inch siege mortars; four 6-inch, nine 3-inch and two 12-pound rifles; thirty-two 12-pound Napoleons; six 6-pound Sawyers; two 9-inch Dahlgrens and three 24-pound guns. After the 9th of June there was added a naval battery of 9-inch Dahlgrens, under Lieutenant Terry of the *Richmond*.[12] Added to these land batteries were the guns of the fleet both above and below the peninsula, with its four guns.[13]

The Confederates, after the first few days, reserved their cannon fire to repel assaults, as they had not enough ammunition to waste on regular bombardments of the Federal positions. An enormous mass of metal was thrown by the Union guns, day and night, into the Confederate works, but with relatively little damage. Richardson puts the total loss at 176 killed and 440 wounded; 200 died from sickness; Gardner's chief surgeon reported 176 killed and 447 wounded; Irwin estimates the losses at 500 by desertion and capture, 700 killed and wounded.[14] An amusing phase of the bombardment was Banks' note to Captain Alden, at the time commanding the fleet, requesting "that the mortar firing from the fleet be stopped, as the shells are bursting in the rear of our battery."[15] Evidently he did not concur in Pemberton's opinion that "mortar boats can do you no possible harm."

On the very day of the junction of the Federal forces (May 24), occurred the first serious clash between the two armies. The forces of Weitzel, Grover and Dwight attacked the pickets and advanced forces of Gardner, and "after a sharp fight" drove them to the "outer line of entrenchments."[16] The Union forces were at this time distributed from north to south as follows: on the right, Weitzel commanded the divisions of himself, Dwight and Paine, besides two regiments of native

[12] *O. R. N.*, 1, XX, 218; *O. R. A.*, I, XXVI, i, 141. A picture of this battery is shown in the *Photographic History*, which gives a good idea of the timber of this region.

[13] *O. R. N.*, 1, XX, 212, *sq.*, 217.

[14] *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, i, 144.

[15] *O. R.*, 1, XX. 244.

[16] Banks' report, *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, i, 13.

negro troops;[17] Grover came next; then Augur held the centre and T. W. Sherman commanded the left wing. Gardner's left was held by the forces of Steedman and Shelby, commanded by Colonel I. G. Steedman; Lyles held the lines where they crossed the railroad; General W. N. R. Beall had charge of the centre, and Colonel W. R. Miles, of Miles' Legion commanded the right wing. Colonel M. J. Smith (formerly an officer of the United States navy) was in general charge of the heavy artillery, with Lieut-Col. P. F. de Gourney commanding the ordnance of the left wing.

Spending May 25th and 26th in careful preparation, Banks launched a general assault on the 27th. Augur and Sherman were to open at daylight, and at the first chance to carry the works in their respective fronts; whereupon Weitzel was to do likewise, Grover holding himself in reserve to reinforce the troops to either his right or left, as need might be. Banks closed his order for the attack with the statement: "Port Hudson must be taken tomorrow."[18]

But it was not.

As we have seen, the Confederates had relied on the ravines, with their steep banks, the magnolia groves and dense thickets on the left, and had erected only detached trenches and rifle pits. During the night of the 26th, rail and log breastworks were hastily added.

Weitzel started at 5 A.M., and by noon drove the Confederates within their parapets. Grover's men clambered up a steep bank, about thirty yards from the trenches, but could not hold this, nor did their efforts farther to their left succeed. Next Dwight sent in his colored troops who were driven back with a loss of 103 killed and wounded, out of 700. Soon both Weitzel's and Grover's men ceased their efforts. Nothing was heard from the left. Banks had been waiting with Augur for Sherman's musketry as a signal. Augur had a level plain in front of him, with a clear view of the Confederate works,

[17] These and other negro troops were later combined to form the "Corps d'Afrique." *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, 539.

[18] *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, i, 509. See also Livermore's brief but excellent account of this assault, *op. cit.*, II, 332 *sqq.*

but the plain was obstructed by "a tangled abatis of huge trees," and back of this was nearly a mile of Confederate artillery and infantry. It had then, been intended that Augur's movements should serve merely to distract attention from Sherman's assault in force. Noon had come, and the cessation of firing on the right revealed a total silence upon the left. What was the trouble? "As the morning wore away," remarks Irwin, "and no sound came from Sherman, General Banks rode to the left and gave fresh orders for the assault; then returning to the centre, about two o'clock he ordered Augur to attack simultaneously."[19] Livermore quotes from Irwin's *History of the Nineteenth Corps* to the effect that "about noon, Banks greatly agitated by the check on his right and still more by the silence on his left, rode down to Sherman's headquarters. 'Hot words passed, the nature of which has not been recorded.' "[20] We may guess at their temperature, however, in the light of Banks' note to Weitzel, dated 1:45 P.M.—"General Sherman has failed utterly and criminally to bring his men into the field. At 12 M. I found him at dinner, his staff officers all with their horses unsaddled and none knowing where to find their commands."[21]

Under the sting of his superior's rebuke, Sherman now attacked with his brigades in column of regiments. Climbing fences and pushing through abatis caused him to lose so heavily that his men had "to seek shelter." Chapin's brigade, on Augur's left, advanced as far as the abatis, which it could not pass. Dudley's brigade, on the right, was to follow, but Banks properly stopped it when he heard of the failure of Sherman's attack. The Federal loss was about 2000 killed and wounded; that of their opponents about 350. Sherman was badly wounded, losing a leg. Instead of taking Port Hudson, as he told his troops he must, Banks had the mortification of writing Grant that the Confederate works were "what would be called 'impregnable.' They are surrounded by ravines, woods, valleys and bayous of the most intricate

[19] *B. & L.* III, 504.

[20] *Op. cit.*, II, 335.

[21] *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, i, 509.

and labyrinthine character, that make the works themselves almost impassable. It requires time even to understand the geography of the position."[22]

Next day he requested a truce, to permit the gathering of his dead and wounded. In granting it Gardner requested Banks to give orders that his skirmishers should not advance towards the Confederate breastworks. "I am compelled," he said, "to make this request or condition, because your entire line moved somewhat forward yesterday afternoon under white flags displayed." Accepting the condition, Banks replied: "I have ascertained that a white flag was in fact improperly used on my right yesterday. It was displayed by an inexperienced officer, without the knowledge of his commanders, and the flag which you displayed in acknowledgment gave them the first information of its existence. I need hardly say that I regret the circumstance exceedingly, as I have taken great pains to enforce the observance of the usages of war, in regard to such flags, within my command."[23] Truly a refreshing contrast to the charge, denial and countercharge of firing upon white flag and Red Cross, 1914–1917.

Settling down to regular siege operations, the Union army and fleet kept up an almost continuous bombardment, night and day. Both Gardner and Banks had their difficulties, increased by the unsoldierly conduct of some of their own men. Members of certain regiments in the Confederate forces were so dilatory in obeying orders as to imperil the success of the defence. Distributing them amongst better troops was tried, to the great disgust of the commanders of the latter, some of whose men were sent to replace the laggards. Others refused to remove from left to right, saying that they had fortified the first position themselves. This sort of thing appears to have continued all through June. At first Colonel Steedman, in whose wing it was worst, tried "conciliation." By the 30th of June, however, he had decided that a soldier from one of these regiments (all from the same state) must "be shot by court martial before they are convinced

[22] *Ibid.*, 1, XXIV, iii, 353.
[23] *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, i, 513–515.

that they have to obey orders irrespective of their own feelings." He considered these regiments "under no discipline," because of their dislike of their officers. A week later he put the commander of one of them under arrest.[24] It was too late then (July 7).

The trouble in the Federal lines was that troops whose term of enlistment had expired wished to leave at once. Many of them, Banks reported to Halleck, "openly say they [do] not consider themselves bound to any perilous service. . . . . The troops near the end of their enlistment say they do not feel like desperate service; the men enlisted for the war do not like to lead when the rest will not follow." To this feeling he attributed the length of the siege and the inability of his troops to retain the occasional footholds they gained.[25]

After nearly two weeks of steady work at entrenching, combined with a continuous bombardment, Banks made another attempt to take the fort. A heavy artillery fire was kept up all of the day and night of the 10th of June. At three o'clock on the morning of the 11th, an effort was made to get within striking distance of the earthworks before daylight. Part of the troops making this essay worked clear through the abatis, only to be discovered and repulsed by the Confederates, who took several prisoners. One detachment, so Steedman reported, actually penetrated the lines and sheltered themselves from the rain, in a slaughter-house. On discovery, they were speedily driven back into the abatis, whence they were dislodged by two companies of the 39th Mississippi. At daylight, another company of Federals was revealed about 100 yards from the first of the Confederate siege guns. Grape and canister, in a double charge caused them to throw down their arms and scamper back to their own lines.[26]

Daylight, of the 14th of June, was the hour set for the second general assault. Dwight, on the left, was to cross the ravine and try to force an entrance into the works on the Confederate right, while Grover and Weitzel were delivering the main attack on

[24] *Ibid.*, 146 *sq.*, 158–163.
[25] *Ibid.*, 563 *sqq.*, 613.
[26] *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, i, 14, 157 *sqq.*

the Federal right. Augur, as before, was to feint in front of the centre. First, however, Banks issued (June 13) the following grandiloquent effusion:

"Respect for the usages of war and a desire to avoid unnecessary sacrifice of life, impose on me the necessity of formally demanding the surrender of the garrison of Port Hudson. I am not unconscious, in making this demand, that the garrison is capable of continuing a vigorous and gallant defence. The events that have transpired during the pending investment exhibit in the commander and garrison a spirit of constancy and courage, that, in a different cause, would be universally regarded as heroism. But I know the extremities to which they are reduced. I have many deserters and prisoners of war. I have captured couriers of the garrison and have in my possession the secret dispatches of the commander. I have at my command a train of artillery seldom equalled in extent and efficiency, which no ordinary fortress can successfully resist, and an infantry force of greatly superior numbers and most determined purpose, that cannot fail to place Port Hudson in my possession at my will. To push the contest to extremities, however, may place the protection of life beyond the control of the commanders of the respective forces. I desire to avoid unnecessary slaughter, and I therefore demand the surrender of the garrison, subject to such conditions only as are imposed by the usages of civilized warfare.[27]"

This dispatch justifies Dmitry's characterization of Banks as "a general of great hopes and many fears." Of this summons, he says: "In lieu of sternness [Banks] posed as a Chesterfield-Talleyrand. As a Chesterfield, in his courtesy, he compliments the endurance of the garrison, while as a Talleyrand, in his diplomacy, he craftily suggests that his army outnumbers Gardner's force eight to one. On his side, Gardner, not finding that special form of surrender nominated in Johnston's bond, declined altogether to consider the demand."[28] His declination was as brief as Banks' summons was verbose: "My duty requires me to defend the position, and therefore

[27] *Ibid.*, 552, *sq.*
[28] *C. M. H.*, X, 117.

I decline to surrender."[29] Farragut had expressed to Banks the opinion that though the Confederate soldiers might be willing to surrender, it would be utterly useless to ask Gardner to do so.[30]

Neither Augur's nor Grover's columns succeeded in effecting an entrance, but the Federal lines were in several places advanced to within 50 to 200 yards of the Confederate works. Brigadier-General Paine was severely wounded, leading an attack upon the Priest Cap, near the railroad. Dwight's guides misdirected him, so his attack, as a whole, came to naught, though on his extreme left, his troops got control of an eminence which commanded the bluff on which was the Citadel. Later, this enabled them to construct a trench within ten yards of the Confederate lines. In consequence of the loss of nearly 4000 troops, Banks felt that his "force was unequal to the task of carrying the works by assault." Wherefore, siege operations were pushed more vigorously, by bombardment, paralleling and sapping.[31]

Concerning the part played by the negro troops in this day's fight, Richardson gives some interesting items. His account is corroborated in its main details by the Confederate Sharpshooter already quoted. The fierce bombardment on the 13th, with Banks' demand for surrender, had of course apprised Gardner of the impending attack. Somehow, he learned that the negro troops on his extreme left would assault in force. To meet this, 1500 men were moved from his right,[32] and put under the command of Col. W. R. Miles. Each soldier had three muskets, already loaded. Every second man was ordered, after the first volley, to confine his activities to reloading the guns of his "Number 1." Miles ordered these men to "shoot low, boys, for it takes two men to carry away a wounded man, and they [the bearers] never come back." The fire was reserved until the enemy was within less than

[29] *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, i, 553.
[30] *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, i, 553.
[31] *Ibid.*, 14; *B. & L.*, III, 595.
[32] Probably thereby enabling Dwight's men to gain the eminence mentioned above.

100 yards. "Fifteen hundred guns," says Richardson, "belched forth with almost a single sound, which was preceded by an ounce slug, which introduced terror and dire confusion into the brains and legs of the ignorant blacks." A second volley was sufficient. The negroes fled, leaving nearly a thousand of their men upon the field. "There upon the ground where they fell, they were permitted to lie for the next three days, when the stench arising from their putrid bodies caused General Gardner to send out a flag of truce, asking that the Federal commander bury his dead."[33] It was arranged that the Federals should supply the teams and wagons, and the Confederates haul and deliver the bodies for burial.

A pleasanter phase of the same day's fight is shown by the following correspondence between the opposing commanders. Wrote Banks: "I have the honor to request your permission to send a small quantity of medical and hospital supplies within your works for the comfort of my wounded in your hands, *and of such of your own as you may desire to use them for*."[34] Gardner replied: "I will send out to meet any party you may wish to send with such medicines and hospital supplies as you may desire to send for your wounded in my possession. I take the liberty to inform you (deeming that you are probably ignorant of the fact) that there are a few of your dead and wounded in the vicinity of my breastworks, and I have attempted to give succor to your wounded, but your sharpshooters have prevented it."[35]

One more quotation from Mr. Richardson's account may be of interest. It appears that at 7:30 A.M., on the 14th of June,

[33] Richardson's article purports to be based upon the memoirs of Col. de Gourney, commanding the artillery on this front. No such book is found in the Library of Congress, or the catalogues of books in print. The incident seems decidedly out of keeping with Banks' humane conduct on other occasions, and no confirmation of this statement is found in the *Official Records*. However, Mr. Nesbit tells me (July 4, 1917) that he distinctly recalls the stench of those rotting corpses, and Miles' injunction to reserve the fire until they could count the buttons on the enemies' coats.

[34] Italics mine.

[35] Both dispatches in *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, i, 557. For a similar request and reply, July 3–5, see same, pages 613 and 617.

those in the centre trenches saw "a dense mass [of Federals] moving towards them in perfect order. In the front ranks there were two or three regiments of New York Zouaves, easily distinguished by their red dress. . . . After getting within a thousand yards, our light guns, six and twelve pounders, opened fire, but did not stop their movement. . . . The brave soldiers attacking were so well drilled that it militated against their success. Having received the command to keep 'closed up,' which is done by side-stepping to the right when a man falls out, in doing so after getting within a hundred yards [*sic.*] they were forced to stop and there, for twenty or thirty minutes [seconds?] was presented a novel sight: regiment after regiment side-stepping, presenting a wavering line, undulating backward and forward without making any progress or getting nearer their goal." After half an hour of shot and shell and musket ball, "it looked as though a wall of dead and wounded was piled in line, resembling a low breastworks." At the command to fall back, "they did so with so much confusion that the charge ended in a woful defeat." Making all due allowance for exaggeration and inaccuracy, this incident and the slaughter of the negroes indicate that Irwin's estimate of the Federal loss at nearly 4000 is not a high one.

Despite these disasters, Banks favored concentrating his artillery upon the Confederate right and making another assault. From this he was dissuaded by Captain J. C. Palfrey, then acting as chief engineer. The latter proposed, instead, to approach the strongest point of the Confederate works (the Priest Cap) by covered trenches and parallels and a sap.[36] This was undertaken before both the Priest Cap and the Citadel. As the *boyaux*[37] got near enough, the Confederates tossed hand grenades into them.

Colonel Provence, of the 16th Arkansas, holding the line across the Plains Store road, discovered on the morning of the 27th of June some earthworks 200 yards in his front and about

[36] Livermore, *op. cit.*, II, 400 *sqq.*

[37] It was an interesting coincidence that a *boyau* was being made in the ravine of a *bayou*, which word is apparently a Louisiana-French corruption of the former. See *New English Dictionary*.

300 yards in advance of the enemy's lines. The reports of two different scouts whom he sent to reconnoitre, made it clear that these works would render it impossible to post pickets outside the Confederate lines. Calling for volunteers, the colonel selected thirty of those responding, and sent them under Lieutenant A. S. McKennan to destroy this trench. Leaving their own works after dark, the sally party accomplished their task, and captured seven men and thirty muskets, besides all the sandbags they could transport.[38]

This did not stop the Federal mining operations, though, any more than the fall of their saproller into the ditch did. By the 1st of July a parallel some 300 yards long was completed in Grover's front, not more than fifty yards from the Confederate's advanced parapet. "We had burrowed into the hard clay of the bluff," says Private J. K. Hosmer, "driving the sap against the obstinate rampart."[39] Mines were being laid under the Priest Cap and the Citadel, in which it was intended to explode thirty barrels of powder. Discovering these sapping operations on this same day, Gardner directed his chief of ordnance, Captain L. J. Girard, to construct a countermine, which was exploded on the 4th of July.[40] Three days later, General Beall thought the Federal works were strong enough to enable them to throw a force into the Confederate lines, unless the regiment (1st Mississippi) holding the threatened Priest Cap should be strongly reinforced.[41] This was not done, however, as the fort surrendered the next day.

We have seen that a large part of Gardner's supplies consisted of corn. From this meal was made, which was the principal ration of his troops. The fire of the Union guns put his grist mill out of commission; but not for long. Farragut wrote (June 18) to Captain Alden of the *Richmond*: "The enemy within Port Hudson has re-established his grist mill in the depot, by means of a locomotive, and I have directed

[38] *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, i, 149, *sqq.*
[39] *Short History of the Mississippi Valley*, 196.
[40] *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, i, 14, 146.
[41] *Ibid.*, 148.

Commander Caldwell to throw his shell at it when he fires."[42] The working of this unique mill is shown and explained in the *Photographic History of the Civil War*. Lifted from the rails, the locomotive had a belt attached to its driving-wheels, and thus turned its traction-power into grinding power to provide the Confederates with cornbread. Even with this ingenious device, they suffered from hunger. Commodore Palmer wrote on the 1st of July that the garrison was said to be eating mule meat. The journal of the *Richmond* for the 7th of July, states that two deserters confirmed this report.[43] A lady of Baton Rouge, who had two brothers in Gardner's army, affirms that one of them said that as for mule meat, he had reached the point where "roasted rat tasted fine." Mr. Nesbit concurs in this epicurean dictum, adding that towards the last they were glad to eat any sort of animal they could catch.

Winston Churchill, in his splendid novel, *The Crisis*, has young Colfax slip out of Vicksburg, and float down the river on a log, to carry dispatches and secure percussion caps. Though Colfax was a figment of his author's brain, his exploit was real. At the moment of this writing, Major Robert L. Pruyn, who performed such a feat lies ill at his home in Baton Rouge. Born, like Gardner, in New York, he had enlisted as a drummer at the age of ten (1844). After serving with Taylor's army in Mexico, he returned with Taylor to the post at Baton Rouge—now part of the grounds and buildings of Louisiana State University. When he was discharged in 1849, he went back to New York, and followed the carpenter's trade. But the spell of the sunny South was too strong, so he returned to Baton Rouge in 1853. On Louisiana's secession, Pruyn enlisted in the Delta Rifles, Company A, 4th Louisiana Infantry. After Shiloh he was made captain of Company B, and served at Vicksburg until July 1862, and took part in the battle of Baton Rouge, after which he was sent to Port Hudson. Gardner had been adjutant of Pruyn's regiment (the 7th U. S. Infantry) in the Mexican War, and knowing Pruyn well, selected him for torpedo service. After

[42] *O. R. N.*, 1, XX, 236.
[43] *Ibid.*, 250, 254, 803.

several couriers had been killed or captured, attempting to slip through Banks' lines with dispatches, Pruyn decided to try his fortunes with Farragut. Hanging empty canteens about him as life preservers, he slipped into the water, on the night of the 10th of June, 1863. In floating down through the fleet, he scraped against a vessel, and alarmed the lookout. Narrowly escaping death or capture, he landed well below the Federal camp and made his difficult and dangerous way to Jackson, Mississippi, where he delivered to Johnston a dispatch which said: "I have repulsed the enemy in several attacks, but am still closely invested. I am getting short of provisions and ammunition of all kinds, and should be speedily reinforced." Johnston's reply, with which Pruyn started back on the 17th of June, was as follows: "Your dispatch of the 10th received. I have not the means of relieving you and your brave garrison. Vicksburg fully occupies me. General Taylor will do what he can on the opposite side of the river. Hold out as long as you can and then, if possible, withdraw in my direction, or cut your way out. It is very important to keep Banks and his forces fully occupied. I regret that I can send you nothing more encouraging." The imaginary Colfax floated down the river on a log; the real Pruyn, with this dispatch in a bottle about his neck, floated in a horse trough, made his way through the Federal pickets opposite Port Hudson, swam the river in the face of Confederate musketry, and delivered his reply to Gardner. He escaped from the fort, just before the surrender, and served in the Atlanta campaign, as a major of cavalry, which position he held at the end of the war. Since then he has lived in Baton Rouge, pursuing the calling of a builder.[44]

Halleck telegraphed Grant on the 7th of July that "the condition of General Banks' army renders it important that you send him aid if it be possible."[45] Possible or not, it was useless. The day before, Federal troops in the advanced lines explained to the wondering Confederates that the salutes and cheering

[44] *C. M. H.*, X., 554 *sqq.* Conversation with J. R. Nesbit, who accompanied Pruyn to the water's edge on June 10.

[45] *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, i, 62.

which so amazed them were due to the fall of Vicksburg. Gardner sent a flag of truce to ask Banks for an official confirmation of this report, and received a copy of Grant's telegram. Next Gardner asked for an armistice to discuss terms of surrender. This being refused, he agreed to surrender at discretion. The actual transfer took place on the 8th of July, when, according to Banks, 5500 prisoners, 20 pieces of heavy artillery, 31 pieces of field artillery, five batteries and considerable ammunition fell into his hands. The Confederates were rationed from the Federal commissary, and most of them paroled.[46]

The Mississippi was again open from the falls of St. Anthony to the Gulf.[47]

Today, "old Port Hudson" is a cluster of small houses and cabins, many of them vacant, some ruinous. Nature and man have combined their forces to isolate the village. On the west the river has deposited a batture so that the "port" is about a mile from the water. The tall trees upon the batture even cut off the very sight of the river. Should the villager wish to gaze upon its waters, he must go to Port Hickey, a mile to the south. To the east of the old Clinton and Port Hudson railroad, man has torn up the part between the old village and Ethel. The other ten miles, from Ethel to Clinton, is now part of the Illinois Central system. Man has also run another railroad, more or less parallel to the river, and its station, a mile to the east of the old village, has usurped the name of Port Hudson, and a village has grown up about it.

Of the Federal earthworks, scarcely a trace remains, and to find that one must scramble down ravines, creep through barbed wire fences and force his way through canebrakes. Three days after the surrender Banks ordered the demolition

[46] *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, i, 52 *sqq.*

[47] It may be noted that the arrivals of vessels from up the river at New Orleans shows clearly the effects of the war. From September 1, 1861, to August 31, 1862, during most of which both Vicksburg and New Orleans were open, 1456 arrived; September 1, 1862 to August 31, 1863, while New Orleans was in Federal hands, and the Confederates controlled the river to Vicksburg, the arrivals dropped to 655; between September 1, 1863, and August 31, 1864, they rose again to 1414. Bonham, *British Consuls in the Confederacy*, 207.

of the works he had so painfully and laboriously constructed.[48] He knew better than anyone else the natural strength of the place, and wisely determined that should he be besieged in his turn, the Confederates must construct their own approaches.

Time and weather have done much to accomplish the same for the Confederate works, and in this man has aided somewhat. Grass grown sections still remain, and a few may even be seen by the casual traveller from the car window. The angles are frequently clearly defined, and here and there a barbette is perceptible. In many places roads have been cut through or run across the trenches, and the rains have helped widen the cuttings. Elsewhere the forest has grown up about and upon the breastworks. Trees twelve to thirty inches in diameter and (so a professor of botany says) some of them thirty to forty years old, may be seen growing upon the old works. Barbed wire fences straggle along or across others, but for a more peaceful purpose than those now to be seen in Flanders. At Port Hudson they are mainly to keep the lowing herd from winding o'er the lea.

Some years ago, Mr. A. H. Jelks, the postmaster at "new" Port Hudson decided to build a barn whose front should be upon the road, the rear opening into the barnyard. At the most suitable point for it, was a section of the entrenchments. Should he leave it, his barn would have to straddle the mound, which would emerge from each door; so he leveled it. Today, the space that was in 1863 occupied by mule-eating soldiers, is the home of forage-eating mules.

Just across the highway from this barn is a large fragment of the same embankment, running roughly north and south. To the east has grown a fine live oak tree, perhaps twenty years old. To the west is the residence and shop of an Italian-American. From this shop was flying on the 16th of June, 1917, the only United States flag visible in Port Hudson—and that was on the Confederates side of the trench!

The city engineer of Baton Rouge relates that some years ago, while making a survey at Port Hudson, he found, in the

[48] *O. R. A.*, 1, XXVI, i, 633.

angle of an old trench, the remains of a stack of arms. All the woodwork was of course gone, and the barrels and bayonets merely a mass of rust, but so gradual had been the decay, as the stocks mouldered away, that the barrels gradually descended to earth, still retaining their position. At the first touch, though, the stack crumbled to pieces.

Fields of cotton and grain grow today where Banks' men charged. Pigs and chickens and calves root and scratch and browse where the Confederates dug and starved and fought. The only war-like suggestion to be found in this peaceful hamlet was the suspicion, aroused by his kodak, that the writer was a German spy!

MILLEDGE L. BONHAM, JR.

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